

NEWS ARTICLE

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You Can't Serve From an Empty Plate, So, F-E-A-S-T!

When the flight attendant reviews safety procedures as the plane takes off, you're shown how to use the oxygen mask. If you're traveling with someone who needs help, you're told to put on your mask before assisting the other person.

Likewise, you're advised to put on your own life jacket before trying to help someone else. It's easier to help another person if you're not struggling to keep yourself afloat.

If you're mountain climbing, you're better able to rescue a fellow climber when your own gear is working properly. The examples go on and on. The message is clear: You're better able to help others if you take time to care for yourself.

SAY "YES" TO YOURSELF

If you've spent a lifetime saying "yes" to the needs of others before you address your own, it can be hard to say "yes" to yourself. But, it's important-if you care about others-that you care for yourself, as well. Here are three powerful reasons why:

1. THE GOLDEN GOOSE IS ONLY GOOD ALIVE

Many of us are familiar with the fairy tale of the goose who laid golden eggs. Under the owner's care, the goose produced her rich bounty every day. Things went well until the owner wanted all the riches at once. He killed the goose only to discover there were no eggs inside. In failing to understand how the goose served best, he destroyed the source of his wealth.

We often make the same mistake that the goose's owner made. Trying to be everything at once, all things to all people all the time, actually can limit our ability to serve others. Daily caring for ourselves enables us to continually help others!

2. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Dr. Christiane Northrup cites her mother, an avid hiker throughout her life, as a role model. Her mother's motto? Don't lighten your pack, strengthen your

back!

To encourage a healthy lifestyle in others, live one yourself. Which motivates more: A mother's words, or the sight of her hiking up a hill?

3. SOMETIMES WE MUST SAY "NO" TO SAY "YES"

Every time we say "yes" to one thing, we're saying "no" to another. Stephen Covey in his book, "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," tells how the "enemy of the 'best' is often the 'good'."

If we say "yes" to hours of volunteer time at meetings where little is accomplished, have we said "no" to spending important time with a friend or family member?

Remember: When people name important influences in their lives, they cite the teacher, not the textbook!

PLAN A F-E-A-S-T FOR YOURSELF!

So, what ARE some ways to care for yourself? Since you can't serve others if your plate is empty, plan to have a F-E-A-S-T.

Encourage others to sit at your table. Here's how it works:

F = FOOD

Treat yourself-and others-at least as well as you do your car! Don't attempt to function on an empty tank . . . make time for regular, balanced meals. Ask yourself: If I were an automobile, what type of mileage would I get from the foods I put in my tank?

While drive-by or dashboard dining may be a necessity at times, continue to fit in sit-down meals with friends and family. The meal table should be more than a feeding trough. Dr. Rachel Remen in "Kitchen Table Wisdom" speaks of the importance of taking time to listen to each other as people do around the kitchen table. Sustain body and soul by sharing food and fellowship while eating together.

E = EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Perhaps you've read interviews with people who are over 100 and still healthy. Many credit diet, some don't. Most keep active. Many don't smoke, but some do. Some avoid alcohol, some drink daily. There are differing factors, but-you've probably NEVER heard ANYONE say they kept healthy by worrying and stewing and fussing and fretting! We need to keep that in mind.

A = ACTIVITY

If food keeps the engine going, activity keeps the body strong so we don't break down by

the side of the road. Think “active lifestyle” as you F-E-A-S-T through the week:

- Can you take the stairs (OK, maybe just take them walking DOWN, for starters!) Instead of the elevator?
- Can you make it easier to walk briskly in the airport between planes by using a backpack rather than a suitcase as your carry-on luggage? (An added bonus: A backpack is easier to stuff under a seat! For added comfort, buy a backpack with padded back and shoulder straps.)
- Are there places within one to two miles from your home that you can walk to, rather than drive, to accomplish your errands? (Drugstore, grocery store, card shop, book store, post office, restaurant, movie theater, etc.)

S = SOCIAL RELATIONS

People who have meaningful, mutually supportive relationships with others tend to lead healthier, happier lives. Dr. Dean Ornish, author of “Love and Survival,” notes people who feel lonely and isolated have a higher risk of premature death from various diseases.

How do you develop these positive relations with others? Here’s a tale to start you thinking.

The story is told of two people moving to a new city. They each asked the same resident what the townspeople were like. In turn, the resident asked the first newcomer what the people were like in her former town. The first newcomer replied with such comments as: “mean,” “selfish,” “lazy” and “not friendly.”

“Well, that’s what you’ll find the people are like here,” the resident replied.

The resident then asked the second newcomer about the people in her former town. She described them as “friendly,” “helpful,” “caring” and “hard workers.”

Again, the resident replied: “That’s what you’ll find the people are like here.”

T = TIME TO SLEEP

One in four adults has insomnia, according to the World Health Organization. Chronic insomnia can contribute to depression. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that more than 100,000 crashes occur yearly because drivers fell asleep at the wheel. Sleeping well is not only nice, it is a necessity.

Throughout history, getting a good night’s rest has been considered a powerful tonic for promoting well being. As Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773) said: “A light supper, a good night’s sleep and a fine morning have often made a hero out of the same man, who, by indigestion, a restless night and a rainy morning would have proved a coward.”

Many a problem may go away if you just sleep on it!

F-E-A-S-T FREQUENTLY

By serving yourself generous portions of healthy behaviors, you'll be able to serve others as well! And when those you care about see your F-E-A-S-T, they may want to prepare one, too.

If you have a question, call Linda Bowman, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, The University of Florida--Santa Rosa County Cooperative Extension Service--IFAS, at (850)623-3868 or (850)939-1259, Ext. 1360 for south county residents, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Hearing impaired individuals may call Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Service at 983-5373 (TDD).

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